






ILLUSIONS OF ADULTING

by Sara Zimmerman

A comic panel showing two women sitting at a wooden table in a cafe. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a purple tank top. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a red tank top. Both have wide-eyed, surprised expressions. There are two white coffee cups on the table. In the background, there is a brown wall with a poster that says 'WELCOME TO THE COFFEE SHOP' and a window with four panes.

Alexis, thanks for
meeting me here.

So, tell me what's going
on now with this crazy
wedding planning.

A comic panel set in a cafe. Two girls are seated at a wooden table. The girl on the left has long dark hair and wears a purple tank top. The girl on the right has blonde hair and wears a red tank top. Both have wide, worried eyes and open mouths, suggesting they are in a state of panic or stress. On the table in front of them are two white coffee cups. In the background, a brown wall features a window with four panes on the left and a door on the right. A framed picture of a steaming coffee cup hangs on the wall between the window and the door. A large speech bubble originates from the blonde girl, containing the text 'I'm so stressed out!'.

I'm so stressed out!

I want to have the wedding I want, but it is so important to my mom to have some things to be a certain way. Since she's giving us \$2000 for the ceremony, I think we have to include some of her ideas.

It's just that I've dreamed
about my wedding since I
was young...



...and now, even with my mom's help,
my budget won't allow for pretty
much anything I really want.

I'm just so sad.



And you still don't want to take Steve's parents' money, even if it means getting a nice ceremony and inviting everyone you want?




ILLUSION:

A cartoon illustration of a bride and groom inside a large, light blue thought bubble. The bride, on the left, has blonde hair in a ponytail and is wearing a red wedding dress. She has a wide, happy smile and her hands are raised in a gesture of surprise or joy. The groom, on the right, has dark hair in a bun and is wearing a grey suit. He is also smiling and has his hands raised. The background of the thought bubble is a solid light blue color.

Thanks for the wedding money and for letting me do everything exactly as I want.

No problem for my future daughter-in-law!


LIKELY REALITY:



Sure. I'll pay for the wedding,
as long as you have it in this
church, wear this dress,
invite my friends.

I'm in a living
nightmare!

It's just that when we've asked his parents for money in the past, it comes with heavy strings attached.



Oh, I bet it can't be THAT bad.

Let's just say that when Steve and I asked for her help with the rental deposit for our apartment, she agreed. But, then when she came, she felt she had the right to choose the paint color and rearrange our furniture.




Yikes!

Yep. So you see
why I'm stressed.



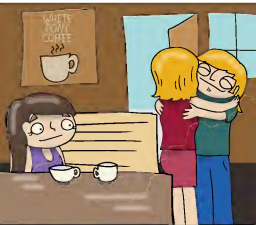
Hi Hailey!

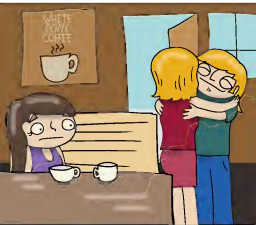


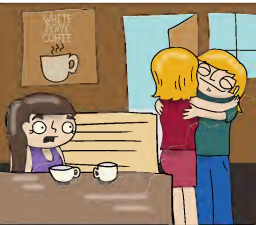


Ethan! What a nice surprise!

Yeah! Funny, because I was just going to text you back from our conversation yesterday, but now I get to see you in person AND get a hug.









A comic panel set in a cafe. Two women are seated at a dark brown table in the foreground. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a purple sleeveless top; she has a surprised expression. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a red sleeveless top; she is smiling broadly. Both have white coffee cups in front of them. In the background, a man with blonde hair and a green t-shirt stands near a doorway, looking towards the women. A window with four panes is visible on the right wall. A speech bubble from the woman in purple points to the man in the background.

Who was THAT?

Oh, that's Ethan. He's not only the one who saved me on the beach, but turns out he is also my boss' nephew and the lawyer I worked with on last week's oil spill PR.

Um... so what does Steve think about hugging and hanging out with a guy that likes you that much?



Likes me? Him?
No. Ethan knows we're
just friends.

A 'friend' doesn't hug you that long and look at you with lovey-dovey eyes.



If you respect your relationship with Steve, you need to shut that down with Ethan... NOW!

Alexis, you're silly. All my guy friends have always treated me like that. Does that mean they ALL like me?



No, Ethan's just plain harmless.



TO BE CONTINUED...

by Sara Zimmerman / Unearthed Comics

Have you ever accepted money from a friend or relative only to be surprised at the expectations (AKA "strings attached") with the gift? Share your experience in the comments below.